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IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently amended) A fishing rod and accessory ring combination, comprising:

a fishing rod shaft portion, having a longitudinal axis and including a butt portion and a reel seat portion;

a rigid fishing accessory ring, including a first aperture provided in a first material, the first aperture configured to securely engage a portion of a said butt portion or reel seat portion such that the accessory ring is prevented from movement along at said longitudinal axis by a securing member; and

a second aperture provided in a second material, the second aperture extending away from the first aperture, the second aperture rigid enough to engage a safety line or a harness line and configured to engage an article of fishing tackle, a harness line, or hook or a safety line or a hook.

2. (Currently amended) The fishing rod and accessory ring combination in accordance with claim 1, further comprising a third aperture provided in a third material, the third aperture extending away from the first aperture, the third aperture configured to engage one or more of an article of fishing tackle, a harness line or hook and a safety line or hook.

3. (Currently amended) The fishing rod and accessory ring combination in accordance with claim 1, wherein the first and second ~~material~~ materials form a contiguous article defining the first and second apertures.

4. (Currently amended) The fishing rod and accessory ring combination in accordance with claim 1, wherein the first and second apertures are completely distinct apertures such that the second aperture is spaced from the first aperture by a portion of one of the first and second materials.
5. (Currently amended) The fishing rod and accessory ring combination in accordance with claim 4, wherein the first and second apertures are spaced from one another by more than one millimeter.
6. (Currently amended) The fishing rod and accessory ring combination in accordance with claim 2, wherein the first, second and third materials form a contiguous article defining the first, second and third apertures.
7. (Currently amended) The fishing rod and accessory ring combination in accordance with claim 2, wherein the first, second and third apertures are completely distinct apertures such that the second aperture is spaced from the first aperture by a portion of one or both of the first and second materials and such that the third aperture is spaced from the first aperture by a portion of one or both of the first and third materials.
8. (Currently amended) The fishing rod and accessory ring combination in accordance with claim 2, wherein the second and third apertures have substantially the same diameters.

9. (Currently amended) The fishing rod and accessory ring combination in accordance with claim 7, wherein the first and second apertures and the first and third apertures are spaced from one another by more than one millimeter.

10. (Currently amended) The fishing rod and accessory ring combination in accordance with claim 2, wherein the second and third apertures are substantially circular in cross section.

11-15. (Cancelled)

16. (Currently amended) The fishing rod and accessory ring combination in accordance with claim 2, wherein the second and third apertures are provided around at least a portion of the circumference of the first aperture.

17-20. (Cancelled)

21. (Currently amended) The fishing rod and accessory ring combination in accordance with claim ~~17~~ 1, wherein a ~~plurality of~~ more than two apertures are provided around the first aperture.

22-25. Cancelled.

26. (New) The fishing rod and accessory ring combination in accordance with claim 1, wherein said accessory ring is installed on a reel seat portion.

27. (New) The fishing rod and accessory ring combination in accordance with claim 26, wherein said securing member abuts said accessory ring against a reel seat hood.
28. (New) The fishing rod and accessory ring combination in accordance with claim 26, wherein said securing member abuts said accessory ring against a reel tab.
29. (New) The fishing rod and accessory ring combination in accordance with claim 1, wherein said securing member comprises a threaded securing member.
30. (New) The fishing rod and accessory ring combination in accordance with claim 1, wherein said securing member comprises a threaded member provided through a portion of said accessory ring and against a portion of the butt portion or reel seat portion.
31. (New) The fishing rod and accessory ring combination in accordance with claim 1, wherein said securing member comprises a threaded portion provided at least partially within a portion of said first aperture, said threaded portion configured to engage a threaded portion of the butt portion or reel seat portion.